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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

5 January 1962

Proposed Amendments

SUBJECT: Cuba as a Military Threat to the US and to Other
American States

Para. 1, lines 8-9

make the "but" clause read:....
but, on balance, we think that they
would be deterred by the risk of
provoking a decisive US preventive
action before such bases could be-
come operational, and by the various
political....

Para. 4, second sentence

delete, "They will probably conclude
that the US could detect...." to read
"They would almost certainly expect
the US to detect...."

Para. 4,

delete all after second sentence,
substitute following:

"They would not be certain that the US would take such action, but
they would almost certainly conclude that there would be a sub-
stantial risk that, in such a case, the US would employ whatever
means were necessary to overthrow the Castro regime and prevent
the completion of the missile bases. They would probably consider

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DOCUMENT NO. 2 that, in such a case, they could prevent the situation from leading

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to nuclear war between themselves and the US, but that it would be highly doubtful whether they could save the Castro regime. Although they might salvage some propaganda value from Castro's overthrow, by heaping opprobrium upon the US as an imperialist aggressor, it would hardly compensate for the psychological and practical effects of their loss of Cuba.

Para. 5, substitute the following.

5. Even so, in the absence of certainty regarding the US reaction and its effectiveness, the USSR might be willing to incur these risks, if it judged that the advantages to be gained from the establishment of operational offensive missile bases in Cuba were sufficiently substantial to warrant the risks. The advantages to be gained would be primarily political. Such missile bases would not add materially to Soviet attack capabilities against the US in the event of general war. Once operational, however, they would be a powerful deterrent against US intervention in Cuba. They would also establish an impressive Soviet presence in the Americas and afford a degree of protection and encouragement to radical revolutionary elements in Latin America. (They would not provide an effective bargaining counter for the withdrawal of US bases from the Sino-Soviet periphery, for, once established, they could hardly be withdrawn without adverse political repercussions.)

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Para. 6, Substitute the following:

6. Against these political advantages, the USSR would have to weigh certain political disadvantages, such as: (a) the character of the Castro regime as an indigenous revolutionary movement would be further compromised --- Cuba would acquire the appearance of a Soviet colony and military outpost; (b) while some Latin American governments might be prompted to take cover in a protective neutralism, the general reaction to this extra-continental intrusion would probably be adverse to the further extension of Castroism by revolutionary means; (c) any propaganda advantage which the USSR now derives from the subject of US overseas bases would be compromised; (d) the USSR would be definitely committed to the defense of Cuba, far from the bases of its power -- a commitment which it has studiously avoided hiterto; (e) the prospects for a political negotiation with the US, which the USSR has sought to cultivate, would be compromised, and a crisis in US-Soviet relations would almost certainly ensue.

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